



**TESTIMONY OF
BRISTOL HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CARE GROUP
BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 16, 2017**

**HB 7027, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June
Thirtieth 2019, And Making Appropriations Therefor**

My name is Chris Boyle and I am the director of public relations and marketing for Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group. Thank you Chairman Formica, Chairwoman Osten and Chairwoman Walker and the entire Appropriations Committee for allowing me to testify today on House Bill **7027, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2019, And Making Appropriations Therefor**.

Bristol Hospital serves approximate 5,000 inpatients and more than 200,000 outpatients each year. We have approximately 1600 employees and our medical staff includes more than 200 providers. Beyond the lifesaving care we provide 24 hours a day, we contribute more than \$260 million to our local and state economies each year.

But this job is much harder because we are under significant financial stress. In addition to government underfunding, we pay a hospital tax of about \$2 million each year. Additionally, if the Small Hospital Pool were eliminated, as it is written under the current proposal, this will cost Bristol Hospital an additional \$2.3 million, equating to the hospital losing almost \$5million. That is money that would have been invested in state-of-the-art equipment, infrastructure improvements and the overall enhancement of the patient experience.

Bristol Hospital is well known for being one of the best high-quality, low-cost hospitals in Connecticut. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid recently recognized Bristol Hospital for its reduction of hospital acquired infections. Bristol Hospital is ranked second in the state out of 28 acute care hospitals as part of the CMS Hospital Acquired Conditions Reduction Program. Bristol Hospital also is the only Magnet recognized hospital in Hartford County. Magnet recognition is a prestigious designation of a hospital's nursing professionalism, teamwork and superiority in patient care.

HB 7027 as drafted establishes yet another tax on hospitals. It involves a scheme to eliminate our real property tax exemption, and lets municipalities tax us.

We've been down this road before. When the state enacted the hospital tax in 2011, the promise was to return more than was taxed. The promise wasn't kept, and the state has repeatedly cut hospitals over the years. That budget scheme has already resulted in more than \$2 billion taxed and cut from hospitals.

Bristol Hospital is the cornerstone of its community. We provide good jobs and are a literal lifeline to the people we serve. We need healthcare policies that are sustainable and improve the quality and access to care, not more taxes that are just bad policy. We need you to preserve healthcare in Connecticut, and stand ready to work with you. Thank you for your consideration of our position.

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